

the MEDDAC-Fort Carson Healthbeat

Serving the Front Range Military Family

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Give Health for the Holidays!

Lindsay Huse
EACH Nurse Epidemiologist

Every year, gift-givers everywhere agonize over their loved ones' holiday gift lists. They want to give something special that shows love and appreciation, but another pair of Santa Claus slippers probably won't do it. This year, show your loved ones how much you value them by giving them the gift of health!

Stress is one of the leading causes of many chronic diseases in the United States. Relieving stress can not only help prevent these diseases, but make day-to-day life more enjoyable.

Think about gift certificates for a spa day or massage. These are classic, and almost everyone enjoys them (even men). You can find discounted prices online and often through mass discount providers.

A day off! Take the kids for a day while a harried mom takes some time for herself or offer to help a friend by doing his or her grocery shopping, cooking, or cleaning for a day. Make a personalized gift certificate that lists the specifics of the 'service' you will provide.

Help in a pinch: Cook a healthy freezer meal for a special family to keep on

hand for an easy dinner on one of those nights that might have resulted in a drive-thru trip.

Offer to keep a pet while a family is out of town for the holidays. It can relieve tremendous stress knowing a pet will be loved and cared for in their absence.

Food is often a popular gift and many people notice their waistlines expanding a few inches this time of year. If food gift (Health continued on page 4)



Safe Toys for the Holidays



3-year-old Christian Rodriguez plays with a wooden toy in one of the hospital's waiting rooms.

Dr. Athena J. Stoyas
EACH Pediatrics

With the holiday season's arrival, it's important to consider safety and your child's age when purchasing a toy. Price or an "educational" label doesn't neces-

sarily make it a better toy. Claims of educational value are not evaluated by any official organization.

A good place to start is to ensure the toy is labeled for your child's age and to read all instructions.

Good Ideas

Infants enjoy high contrast, brightly colored toys with simple clear lines. These include items that they can shake, rattle, and touch. Great examples include: mobiles, mirrors, stacking rings, push pull toys, and exercise mats.

Toddlers do well with balls, shape sorting, mechanical pop-up or busy boxes with knobs, buttons, and levers. They also love role-playing toys such as small kitchens and dress-up.

Preschool-aged children enjoy arts and crafts, blocks and construction sets, puzzles, and play activities that allow them to pretend.

Ideas for older children include j u m p (Toys continued on page 4)

Winter Driving Tips

The National Highway Transportation Safety Administration

No one wants to break down in any season, but especially not in cold or snowy winter weather.

When the temperature drops, so does battery power. Plus, it takes more power to start your vehicle in cold weather. Find out if your battery is up to the challenges of winter.

When coolant freezes, it expands. Such expansion can potentially damage your vehicle's engine block beyond repair.

Make sure you have enough coolant in your vehicle and that it's designed to withstand the winter temperatures you might experience in your area.

You can go through a lot of windshield wiper fluid fairly quickly in a single snowstorm, so be prepared. Completely fill your vehicle's reservoir with high-quality, "no-freeze" fluid.

Check your windshield wipers and defrosters. Make sure your windshield wipers work and replace worn blades.

Check tire pressure and make sure each tire is filled to the vehicle manufacturer's suggested (Driving continued on page 4)

Talking Turkey: A memoir teaching you to safely deep-fry

Anthony Mattek
EACH Safety Specialist

So, a bunch of friends said that deep-frying a turkey for the holidays was a snap.

Not a single person on our Forward Observation Base had ever done this before. But we all thought, "How hard can this be?" We are guys.

Since we didn't have a turkey fryer, we settled for the open fire pit. We used local firewood, ordered peanut oil, and grabbed a large pot. We crafted a turkey holder from some leftover Hesco-Barrier wire and we were all set.

Since no one had any real experience, we figured what we have heard from others was good enough. After all, we are men! We would never read an instruction manual before attempting something for the first time - that doesn't sound manly!

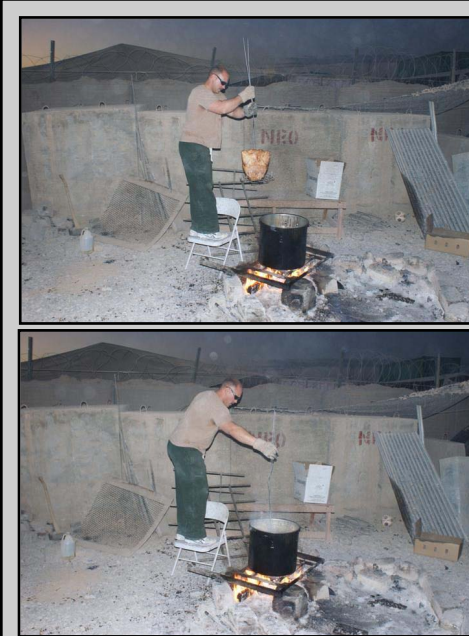
I'm sure you are thinking to yourself, "Just how many safety violations are there in this photo?"

In all fairness, we were doing the best that we could in an area that most would consider wilderness camping. With limited or no dining facilities, we had to cook over a fire pit on numerous occasions.

There are many items nearby that we should have moved out of the way in case we had to jump we would land safely. We did have our personal protective equipment!

We figured we'd have the oil heated up to the right temperature and we'd lower the turkey into the pot. At this point in time, we learn there is a need for a fill line and we should have followed those instructions. We initially put enough oil so it would be as deep as the turkey and completely submersed. Of course, when you forget the laws of displacement, you can have some problems when you place the turkey into the pot.

Some say it was a good thing we were located in the mountains where all around us was nothing but desert sand and rocks. However, I can attest that even sand and rocks stay on fire when oil is splashed all over them.



A series of photos illustrates what could happen if you don't follow the proper safety procedures to deep fry a turkey.

So here's a chance for you to learn from our experience so that your holiday cooking is much more fun and enjoyable.

How to Deep Fry a Turkey:

Step One: Get a turkey, a very large cooking pot and some cooking oil. You can use vegetable oil but it's better if you use peanut oil. However, peanut oil is very expensive and you are going to need several gallons of it.

Step Two: The turkey needs to be defrosted and washed. Make sure there are no pop-up timer devices or anything left inside. Most importantly, it must be completely dry. I mean really, really dry. You know what happens when you put water in boiling oil, don't you?

You also need to truss the turkey, securing the legs, neck flap, wings and tail to the body.

Step Three: To determine the perfect amount of oil, place the turkey in the pot and add water until the bird is completely covered - plus an inch or two. With the turkey and water inside, there should still be several inches of room between the oil and the top of the pot. If it's a close call, you need either a bigger pot or a smaller turkey. Remove the turkey and measure the water. This is the amount of oil you will need.

Step Four: Dry and season the tur-

key. Various recipes call for seasoning rubs or injection mixtures.

Step Five: Make sure your frying pot is completely dry. Water left behind can cause some serious problems once you add the oil and start heating it up.

Step Six: Add the oil to the pot and bring it to a temperature of about 375 degrees. You should get a really good thermometer so you can get the temperatures right.

Step Seven: This is where it gets tricky. The turkey needs to be room temperature and dry. Turn off the burner when you put the turkey in. You are going to lower the bird into the pot of very hot oil. The oil is going to splatter. You need some very good cooking gloves and a way to put the turkey in the oil while you are a safe distance away from the pot. This is the reason why it's really not that good of an idea to do it on your stove top. There are now devices to help you that give you a good hold on the turkey. Slowly lower the turkey into the oil.

A good method here is dunking. When you lower the turkey into the oil, it will boil up. This is why you want the burner off when you do it. People have been burned by hot oil hitting the burner. You might (Turkey fry continued on page 5)

Holiday Blues: What is it and what can you do?

Capt. Claudia Bradford
EACH Behavioral Health Department

The holidays are supposed to be a time of joy and laughter, filled with family and friends, but for many people it is a time where they feel depressed and lonely. That's right, the holidays can bring on feelings of sadness and anxiety which are hard to shake, especially for many soldiers who are far away from their families and loved ones. Dealing with deployment over the holidays can be difficult.

There are many reasons for these feelings of sadness, low energy, decreased motivation, fatigue and for some people – financial stress, but how do you cope with them?

First, you have to recognize some of the signs: Headaches, an inability to sleep or sleeping too much, changes in appetite that cause either weight loss or gain, agitation and anxiety, excessive or inappropriate feelings of guilt, diminished ability to think clearly or concentrate, decreased interest in activities that are usually enjoyable, such as food, hobbies and friends.

What can you do about these feelings?

1. Take things one day at a time and, if need be, one hour at a time.
2. You should try and maintain a normal routine. Keep up with your daily activities and not let things slide.



3. It's important to get enough sleep or at least enough rest.
 4. Regular exercise, even walking, helps relieve stress, tension and improve moods.
 5. Eat a healthy, balanced diet. Limit high calorie foods and junk food.
 6. Avoid using alcohol, medications or other drugs to mask the pain.
 7. Do those activities or things and be with the people that comfort, sustain, nourish and recharge you.
 8. Remember the healthy coping strategies you have used in the past to survive challenges. Draw on these strengths again.
- The acronym R-E-S-T can be

helpful in remembering ways to cope with the holiday blues

R- Reasonable expectations and goals

E-Exercise daily, even if it is only a 20 minute walk during lunch

S-Stress relief, incorporate ways to relief stress like aromatherapy, reading a book, playing with your dog or taking a relaxing bubble bath

T-Time to relax and remember, think about some past holidays where you were surrounded by friends and family and recall the way you felt. Find time for yourself.

For more information, advice or assistance, you can call the following organizations:

- Department of Behavioral Health, 4th floor, Evans Army Community Hospital, (719) 526-7155

- Army Alcohol and Substance Abuse Program (ASAP), (719) 526-2862

- Military One Source, (800) 342-9647 or www.militaryonesource.com

This is a program open to all military members and their families and it includes 10 free behavioral health sessions that are totally confidential.

- VA Mental Health Home webpage at www.mentalhealth.va.gov or the VA suicidal prevention hotline, (800) 273-8255 ❄️



Blocked or clogged chimneys can cause carbon monoxide to vent into a home.

Preventing carbon monoxide poisoning

Information from the
Centers for Disease Control

More than 400 people die each year in the US from unintentional, non-fire related carbon monoxide poisoning.

CO is found in fumes produced by furnaces, vehicles, portable generators, stoves, lanterns, gas ranges, or burning charcoal or wood. CO from these sources can build up in enclosed or partially enclosed spaces. People and animals in these spaces can be poisoned and can die from breathing CO.

When power outages occur during emergencies such as hurricanes or winter storms, the use of alterna-

tive sources of power for heating, cooling, or cooking can cause carbon monoxide (CO) to build up in a home, garage, or camper and to poison the people and animals inside.

Recognizing CO Poisoning

The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. People who are sleeping or who have been drinking alcohol can die from CO poisoning before ever having symptoms. If you suspect the CO is contaminating your indoor environment, ventilate the area.

(Continued on page 5)

Omega 3: Your heart healthy friend

Lt. Kristina Vilale
Nutrition Care Department

As I walk through the grocery store, Omega-3 fats seem to be everywhere! They are advertised in peanut butter, vegetable spreads, oatmeal, and even orange juice. As I proceed to the checkout counter, I notice a couple of magazine headlines saying you should eat salmon and flaxseed because they're high in Omega-3 fats and really good for you. I thought, "When in the world did this happen? Is it really necessary to be plugging Omega-3 fats in foods? How would I benefit from them? How accurate are these magazines?" Here are some answers.

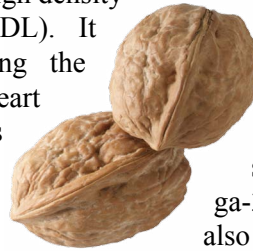
Omega-3 fats explained

Fats are not your enemy. You need fat to absorb fat soluble vitamins. However, there are bad and better fats. Omega-3s are the better kind, in fact, Omega-3 fats are "essential." The body can't make them on its own and it needs them for many functions.

Benefits include decreasing coronary heart disease risk, and helping to reduce symptoms of hypertension, joint pain, and dry, itchy skin.

Omega-3 fats are responsible for making hormones called prostaglandins. These may improve your circulation by preventing your arteries from thickening and may improve your blood pressure. This helps lower bad cholesterol, called low density lipoproteins (LDL), and increase good cholesterol, called high density lipoproteins (HDL). It means decreasing the risk of heart attacks and strokes.

Omega-3 fats are also necessary for proper brain and nerve development in infants.



Where can I find Omega-3 fats?

The American Heart Association recommends eating at least 12 ounces of seafood or 2 servings of fatty fish a week to get your Omega-3 fats. A serving is 3.5 ounces cooked or ¾ cup flaked fish. Omega-3 rich seafood are mainly fatty, cold-water fish, like salmon, tuna, halibut, and herring, but you can also find it in shrimp and scallops. Other sources include flaxseeds, walnuts, hemp

seeds, soybeans, and some dark green leafy vegetables. Although Omega-3 fats are best absorbed from food, there are also supplements. Because of the fish flavor, people often don't like them but one tip is to freeze fish oil supplements to hide the strong taste.

Too much Omega-3 fats?

There are three potential side-effects to Omega-3 fats. First, because Omega-3 fats are a blood thinner, too much Omega-3 fats may impair your blood's ability to clot. This is important to note for people who already take blood thinners or have a bleeding disorder. Second, you may experience feelings of an upset stomach or nausea. This side-effect only occurs in about 4 percent of people at low doses. Finally, expectant mothers and children should consider plant sources for their Omega-3 fats, such as soybeans, flaxseed, and leafy green vegetables because mercury levels in some fish can be dangerous to them.

For more information on Omega-3 fat sources right for you, you can go to the American Heart Association Website: <http://www.americanheart.org> ❄

Turkey Fry (Cont. from page 2)

not need to do more than a single dunk but you should be prepared to raise the bird out of the oil if it starts boiling up. You can greatly reduce the mess and risk of personal injury by lifting the bird up as the oil boils around it. A couple of dunks and the turkey should be nicely settled in.

Step Eight: Once the bird is safely resting in the oil, turn the burner back on to get to a temperature of 350 degrees F. Don't wander too far because the turkey will be done soon. A deep fried turkey cooks at a rate of about 3 to 3 1/2 minutes per pound. A ten pound turkey should take 30-35 minutes. A thermometer can

help you test for doneness, but, of course, you will need to lift the turkey out to test it.

Step Nine: Remove the turkey from the oil when it's done. Do this slowly and after you have turned off the burner. Let the turkey drain a little bit and you're set to go.

Step Ten: Carve and enjoy. If you have never had a turkey cooked this way then you have not finished your life requirements. Do this and you may never put a turkey in the oven again. Despite what you might think, this turkey is not oily or greasy. It's crisp, juicy and delicious. ❄



CO Poisoning (Cont. from page 3)

Prevent Exposure

- Do have your heating system, water heater and any other gas, oil, or coal burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician every year.
 - Do install a battery-operated CO detector in your home and check or replace the battery when you change the time on your clocks each spring and fall. If the detector sounds leave your home immediately and call 911.
 - Do seek prompt medical attention if you suspect CO poisoning and are feeling dizzy, light-headed, or nauseous.
 - Don't use a generator, charcoal grill, camp stove, or other gasoline or charcoal-burning device inside your home, basement, or garage or near a window.
 - Don't run a car or truck inside a garage attached to your house, even if you leave the door open.
 - Don't burn anything in a stove or fireplace that isn't vented.
 - Don't heat your house with a gas oven.
- CO poisoning is entirely preventable. Protect yourself and your family by acting wisely in case of a power outage and learning the symptoms of CO poisoning. ❄

Health (Cont. from page 1)

baskets are your thing, visit your local health food or farmers' market and pick up fresh, healthy items to stock your baskets. Dark chocolate, red wine, healthy items like macadamia nuts and whole pomegranates are healthy but special (and tasty!) enough to make a food basket seem gift-worthy.

Fitness can be a surprisingly easy and fun gift to give. While gym memberships or fitness DVDs are a great idea, there is ample room for creativity. Pay a friend's

entry fee for an upcoming 5k race. Then, buy your own entry and train together!

Instead of a "Jelly of the Month" club, make your own "Hike of the Month" club and give certificates for a different trail to hike together each month. These types of gifts can be very specific to the person receiving them!

If you aren't particularly healthy yourself, your closest loved ones may treasure a heartfelt commitment by you to change an unhealthy habit

this year: Quit smoking, start a walking regimen, or get control of your weight. Write your commitment in a letter and then stick to your promise.

While many of these ideas aren't traditional, they'll mean more to your friends and loved ones than any trinket when they realize you truly were thinking of them, and not just ticking off yet another name on a list. May you have a happy, healthy holiday season and year ahead! ❄️

Driving (Cont. from page 1)

pounds per square inch of air pressure.

Look closely at your tread and replace tires with uneven wear or insufficient tread. Tread should be at least 1/16 of an inch or greater on all tires.

Drive slowly. It's harder to control your vehicle on a slick or snow-covered surface. Sufficiently increase your following distance so you'll have plenty of time to stop.

Know what kind of brakes you have and how to use them properly. In general, if you have anti-lock brakes, apply firm pressure, if you have non anti-lock brakes, pump the brakes gently.

If you skid, stay calm and ease your foot off the gas while carefully steering in the direction you want the front of your vehicle to go. This procedure, known as "steering into the skid," will bring the back end of your car in line with the front.

To avoid carbon monoxide poisoning when stuck in snow, be sure to keep your vehicle's exhaust pipe clear of snow and ice, run your vehicle only in the open with the windows partially down, and run it only long enough to keep warm.

Carry items in your vehicle to handle common winter driving tasks — such as cleaning off your windshield. For emergencies, keep the following on hand:

- Snow shovel, broom, and ice scraper.
- Abrasive material, such as sand or kitty litter, in case your vehicle gets stuck in the snow.
- Jumper cables, flashlight and warning devices, such as flares and markers.
- Blankets for protection from the cold.
- A cell phone, water, food, and any necessary medicine. ❄️

Toys (Cont. from page 1)

ropes, card and board games, musical instruments, and science toys that help them to explore their environment.

A good book read by a parent can be an enjoyable learning experience for both the parent and child.

Why play?

Child-driven free playtime is important to promote imagination, brain development, and fine motor skills. Research shows active play is better than passively watching TV, even from "educational" programs.

Children learn more from interaction with people and their environment. Those under two years should not watch any television.

Older children may learn hand-eye coordination and other lessons from educational video or computer games.

However, these activities combined should be less than one to two hours a day and should not be in a child's bedroom. They should not promote violence, gender or racial stereotypes.

Notes of caution

Make sure toys are not too loud because it can cause hearing loss. Plastic toys should be sturdy and not easily broken. Electronic toys should be "UL Approved".

Ensure toy parts are larger than your child's mouth to prevent choking. Avoid shooting toys which cause choking and eye injuries. Toys with

small magnets and disc batteries should not be given to small children, especially those under three years old. They can cause choking and burn holes in the throat and lungs. If your child swallows a battery or magnet, go to the emergency room immediately. If small batteries can't be avoided, ensure they are secured in a compartment sealed with a screw. In addition, kids can also choke or suffocate on balloons or blown-up gloves.

Art supplies should be nontoxic and not contain lead. Crayons and paints should say "ASTM D-4236" on the package. It means the items have been tested by the American Society for Testing and Materials. Because of the risk of fire or chemical burns, science kits aren't appropriate gifts for children under 12.

Parents can also make sure stuffed toys are machine washable and well-made so parts don't become choking hazards. Fabric toys should be flame resistant or retardant.

If the holiday list includes something for the crib, watch out for hanging strings or wires that could cause strangulation. All strings associated with a toy should be less than seven inches and should be out of reach of the infant. Remove strings and tags prior to giving a toy to a child and avoid toys with sharp ends or small ends that can go to the back of a child's mouth. ❄️



Keeping our standard of care high

Christine Levy
Evans Joint Commission Sustainment Officer

Ever wonder who keeps an eye on Evans Army Community Hospital while we keep an eye on patients? It's an organization called The Joint Commission (TJC).

TJC is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to improving the safe practice and quality of care for all beneficiaries. EACH voluntarily submits to an evaluation and accreditation by the group at least every three years.

That doesn't mean EACH waits for that evaluation. Instead, we prepare for a survey every day by instituting and evaluating a variety of safety and quality initiatives. As a matter of fact, we have successfully passed two full and one unannounced survey over the last three years. A team of

TJC surveyors can pick a snapshot of our facility at any point in time to review. The team also examines a compilation of data from committees like Infection Control, Performance Improvement and Environment of Care.

It means we have activities behind-the-scenes every day to ensure our staff does the right thing, for the right patient, in the right place and at the right time. In addition, EACH watches over the quality at outlying clinics on post, clinics in Pueblo and Utah, as well as our Premier Army Health Clinic at the north end of town.

Patients and staff have a right to contact The Joint Commission if they feel we are not providing quality or safe care. However, we encourage everyone to first contact our Patient Representatives office at 526- 7256 or our

Joint Commission Sustainment Officer at 526-7923. Issues can frequently be addressed immediately and we provide personal clarification to you.

If we are undergoing a Joint Commission survey, there will be bulletins posted in the hospital. Surveyors may ask patients questions but will always give patients the option of not participating. It is a voluntary process. Please be assured that surveyors will not interrupt patient care and will not compromise patient privacy.

The EACH staff welcomes surveyors as they provide us with an objective report card on how we're doing. We thank you, our patients, for also welcoming them and for giving us constructive feedback at any time.

CARE WITH HONOR!



FOR YOUR INFORMATION



TRICARE appointment line changes

The local number to call for medical appointments is now 526-CARE or 524-CARE. Although the old line is currently working, it will be discontinued after some time and the new numbers will become the only effective local phone lines. Please take note of the new numbers listed above. In addition, remember that you can make an appointment online anytime through www.tricareonline.com

TRICARE Data Breach

Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC) reported a data breach involving personally identifiable and protected health information

impacting an estimated 4.9 million military clinic and hospital patients. The information was on backup tapes from an electronic health care record capturing data from 1992 through September 2011. The data may include Social Security numbers, addresses and phone numbers, and some personal health data. There is no financial data on the tapes. The risk of harm is judged to be low despite the data involved. SAIC has sent letters to patients who may request a year of credit monitoring and credit restoration services. Anyone with questions may call the toll free number (855) 366-0140 or www.tricare.mil/breach.

Suicide Hotline

Members of the military, veterans and

any family members can text the Veteran Crisis Center for help in averting suicide. No key word or specific messaging is required. Just send a message to: 838255. There's no cost. All wireless carriers in the U.S. have waived fees to this number. You can also call visit their website at www.veteranscrisisline.net/

Wellness Center

The Wellness Center facilitates healthy lifestyle programs to all Soldiers and their Families, retirees and civilians. We provide health coaching, fitness evaluation, exercise prescriptions, running shoe assessment, metabolic analysis, health education and prevention. Our classes include tobacco cessation, stress management, and relaxation techniques. contact our center at 719-526-3887 to schedule a class.

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